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Integrated midterm review and progress report on implementation of the UNFPA strategic plan, 2014-2017

Report of the Executive Director

Summary

This report contains the midterm review of and progress report on the UNFPA strategic plan, 2014-2017, in accordance with Executive Board decision 2013/31. The report assesses the changing development environment and the validity of the UNFPA strategic plan; reviews the cumulative progress of the implementation of the plan during its first two years (2014-2015); and proposes necessary adjustments. The review also addresses the progress achieved in implementing General Assembly resolution 67/226 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system. UNFPA conducted a broad consultative process for the review, using internal and external resources, and undertook it in collaboration with other United Nations organizations.

The review concludes that the UNFPA strategic plan, 2014-2017, has positioned the organization well in supporting Member States and that UNFPA is "fit for purpose" in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The review confirms the strategic focus of UNFPA and that the strategic plan has strengthened the organization's focus and priorities, enabling it to achieve results in development as well as in organizational effectiveness and efficiency. It proposes minor adjustments to better align the strategic plan with the 2030 Agenda during the remaining period of the plan (2016-2017), and enable UNFPA to respond to the changing development environment, specifically in the humanitarian field.

Elements of a decision are contained in section V of the report.

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I. Introduction

1. UNFPA submits this midterm review of its strategic plan, 2014-2017, in accordance with Executive Board decision 2013/31. The decision requested UNFPA to "take into consideration the results of the discussions of the United Nations post-2015 development agenda as well as the review of the International Conference on Population and Development". The review also takes into account the broader development context.

2. In addition, the Executive Board requested UNFPA to review the categorization of countries in the light of updates in data as part of the midterm review and to reassess the classification of a particular country in the event that it informs UNFPA of a potential error (paragraph 15, Executive Board decision 2013/31). UNFPA also undertook a review of its global and regional interventions, in accordance with the strategic framework for UNFPA global and regional interventions (DP/FPA/2014/8), which the Board approved in decision 2014/16. All of these requirements are addressed as part of the present submission. The midterm review of the integrated budget, 2014-2017 (DP/FPA/2016/3), which provides the updated financial framework for 2014-2017, complements this report.

3. The midterm review consisted of a desk study of documents, including discussion papers commissioned to inform the review, evaluations and audit findings. In addition, UNFPA conducted internal and external consultations through informal briefings with the Executive Board; established an internal reference group; conducted in-depth interviews at headquarters and in the field; and created an online platform to solicit feedback and reflections from offices. The review was conducted in coordination with other funds and programmes of the United Nations – UNDP; the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF); the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women); and the United Nations World Food Programme – to ensure coherent approaches and share lessons learned.

4. The midterm review does not constitute a new strategic plan. It reflects on the progress made to achieve the strategic plan results; analyses implementation gaps; and assesses the soundness of the strategic plan in the changing development context. The review suggests that minor adjustments should be made to the integrated results framework, based on experience in implementing the strategic plan and on changes in available resources. The adjustments proposed as part of this midterm review will be effected as of 1 January 2017, unless otherwise noted.

II. Global context

5. The past two years have seen marked changes in the global development landscape; these have created opportunities and challenges for UNFPA. In 2014, the global review of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) was successfully concluded, with the General Assembly taking note of the review contained in the Framework of Actions for the follow-up to the ICPD Programme of Action Beyond 2014. The year 2015 marked the end of the Millennium Development Goals and heralded the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development laid the basis for implementing the new Sustainable Development Goals through measures to overhaul global finance practices and generate investments to tackle economic, social and environmental challenges.

6. Between 1990 and 2015, the number of people living in extreme poverty declined by more than half; contraceptive prevalence increased from 55 per cent to 64 per cent; births assisted by skilled health personnel increased from 59 per cent to 71 per cent; and the maternal mortality ratio declined by 44 per cent.

7. However, income inequalities widened, especially in countries that were transitioning from low to middle-income countries. The target of reducing maternal mortality by 75 per cent was not met, and child marriage and adolescent pregnancy remain high. In 2015, more than one in five adolescents were married or in union, and 15.3 million adolescents were expected to give birth.

8. In 2015, humanitarian crises escalated in scope and complexity, stretching response efforts and exerting pressure on dwindling aid resources. The world witnessed the largest forced displacement of people since World War II; as a consequence, 60 per cent of preventable maternal deaths now take place in settings of conflict, displacement and natural disasters.

9. Official development assistance decreased in 2013 and 2014. The proportion of this assistance to population activities declined, from almost 8 per cent to 6 per cent. Uneven global economic growth and economic decline in emerging markets, combined with the strengthening of the United States dollar against most major currencies, contributed to a decrease in resources.

10. Climate change, especially in the Sahel region and in parts of Asia and the Pacific, is destroying livelihoods, worsening poverty, compelling people to relocate, and compounding the vicious cycle of poverty and vulnerability. The intrinsic link between poverty and vulnerability to crises has made the separation of humanitarian and development activities unacceptable. The adoption of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, and the Paris Agreement on climate change pave the way for a greater focus and commitment to tackle natural and man-made hazards and their environmental, technological and biological impacts.

III. Midterm progress and key challenges

A. Summary of key results and challenges

11. This section assesses the cumulative progress made towards the midterm strategic plan targets, based on two levels: (a) the 2014 to 2015 trends of the *outcome* indicators of the strategic plan; and (b) achievement of the strategic plan *outputs*, including the global and regional interventions. To assess progress, a comparison was made between the indicator values achieved in 2015 versus the 2015 targets. The achievement of an output is measured by the average achievement of its indicator targets.

12. This section also reviews the performance of tools and mechanisms put in place to support the implementation of the strategic plan. UNFPA has made strong progress in implementing the strategic plan. At the outcome level, 16 of 20 indicators showed expected trends. Details of the outcome trends are discussed under each of the respective outcome sections. UNFPA contributes to these trends by achieving results at the strategic plan output level. Box 1 below highlights some of the key achievements attained from the strategic plan outputs.

Box 1: Key achievements in 2014-2015

Development

- Estimated impact of procurement and of expanding access to contraceptives: 53 million additional users accessing modern family planning methods; 78 million couples protected for one year from unwanted pregnancies; 23 million unintended pregnancies and 7 million unsafe abortions prevented; and 63,342 maternal deaths averted.
- 23 million adolescents benefited from integrated sexual and reproductive health services.
- 23,579 fistula repair surgeries were supported.
- 2,920 communities publicly declared the abandonment of female genital mutilation.
- Over 10.6 million women and girls in humanitarian crises benefited from sexual and reproductive health services and gender-based violence prevention services.
- The ICPD review concluded and culminated in the Framework of Actions for the follow-up to the Programme of Action of the ICPD Beyond 2014.
- Evidence furnished to enable the integration of the ICPD agenda, including the demographic dividend, into the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Organizational effectiveness and efficiency

- UNFPA programme data published on the International Aid Transparency Initiative.
- Enterprise risk management initiated.
- Unqualified audit opinion obtained in 2014 and in 2015.
- Programming system to systematize results-based management launched.
- Independent evaluation office established.
- United Nations harmonization embraced: 113 UNFPA country offices with at least one common service; 28 with all common services.

13. At the output level, UNFPA was able to achieve strong results and fulfil its commitments. Of the 15 development outputs, UNFPA fully achieved midterm targets for nine outputs (see figure 1). It achieved targets by 60-99 per cent for five outputs. Only one output showed an achievement of less than 60 per cent (see annex 2, UNFPA strategic plan score card and indicator updates). With regard to organizational effectiveness and efficiency, UNFPA demonstrated equally good results, as shown in table 5. With regard to the global and regional interventions, 87 per cent of the outputs were fully achieved; 13 per cent achieved 60-99 per cent; and no outputs achieved less than 60 per cent (see annex 4, global and regional interventions).

Figure 1. Achievement of strategic plan outputs, 2014-2015

▪ 100 per cent and above ▪ 60-99 per cent ▪ Below 60 per cent

Source: Country office annual reports, 2014-2015

14. The reasons for not fully achieving the six outputs include: (a) the need to adapt to a change in national priorities; (b) the need to subsequently postpone planned activities; (c) budget cuts; (d) limited national capacity; (e) cultural sensitivity; and (f) humanitarian situations (see figure 2). The lack of funding was a primary reason for the limited progress (below 60 per cent) in achieving the output on strengthening capacity for data analysis.

Figure 2. Types of challenges cited by country offices

▪ Change in national priorities
▪ Postponed planned activities
▪ Budget cuts
▪ Limited national capacity
▪ Cultural sensitivity
▪ Humanitarian situations
▪ Other

Source: Country office annual reports, 2014-2015

15. With regard to mechanisms and tools, UNFPA developed an integrated results framework (DP/FPA/2013/12, annex 1) as one of the key tools to support the implementation of the strategic plan. This tool performed well and strengthened results-based management in UNFPA. A review undertaken in 2014 by the Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network found that "UNFPA has improved its management for results at both organisational and country levels. It has implemented efforts to instil a results-oriented culture at the organisational level through refocusing the strategic direction (bull's eye) and adopting a robust integrated results framework and outcome theories of change."

16. The new business model, introduced to increase focus and apply different modes of engagement to a country depending on the country's needs and its ability to fund its needs, was implemented and it progressed as planned. Country programmes gradually aligned to this model. Internal assessments conducted in 2015 found that 98 per cent of ongoing country programmes were satisfactorily aligned to the model, and all 29 country programmes developed in 2015 were satisfactorily aligned (see annex 6: Alignment to the UNFPA strategic plan, progress as of 2015).

17. UNFPA has sharpened its focus. It no longer tries to address all outcomes and outputs in every country programme. Forty per cent of country programmes work on a maximum of three of the four strategic plan outcomes; the country programmes developed in 2015 concentrate their efforts, on average, on four out of the 15 strategic plan outputs.

B. Results in detail

Outcome 1: Increased availability and use of integrated sexual and reproductive health services (including family planning, maternal health and HIV) that are gender-responsive and meet human rights standards for quality of care and equity in access

18. The outcome indicators for increasing the availability and use of sexual and reproductive health services showed mostly positive trends. Births attended by skilled providers and the availability at service-delivery points of life-saving medicines from the priority list of the World Health Organization (WHO) increased. The number of countries that increased their budget allocations to sexual and reproductive health services and the commitment of regional bodies to sexual and reproductive health services increased.

19. However, contraceptive use and condom use among people with more than one partner hardly changed, even though annual increases of 3.2 per cent and 1.7 per cent in contraceptive prevalence were reported in East and Southern Africa and in West and Central Africa, respectively. The proportion of countries not experiencing contraceptive stock-outs showed mixed trends, increasing in 2014 but declining in 2015.

20. At the output level, the targets regarding family planning and maternal health services were fully achieved (table 1). The targets for national functional logistical management information systems, demand generation for family planning, national midwifery workforce policies, maternal death surveillance systems and fistula repair surgeries were also met. The target for using emergency obstetric and neonatal care assessments to inform maternal and newborn health services was not met, partly because of financial constraints.

Table 1. Scorecard for outcome 1

Output	Performance in 2014-2015
Increased national capacity to:	
1. Deliver integrated sexual and reproductive health services	● (Orange)
2. Strengthen enabling environments; increase demand for and supply of modern contraceptives; and improve quality of family planning services	● (Green)
3. Deliver comprehensive maternal health services	● (Green)
4. Deliver HIV programmes	● (Orange)
5. Provide sexual and reproductive health services in humanitarian settings	● (Green)
Expenses: $1,001.5 million (61.9 per cent of programme expenses; 52.7 per cent of total expenses)	

Output achievement: Green = 100 per cent and above; Orange = 60 per cent to 99 per cent; Red = below 60 per cent. (Legend applies to tables 1-5).

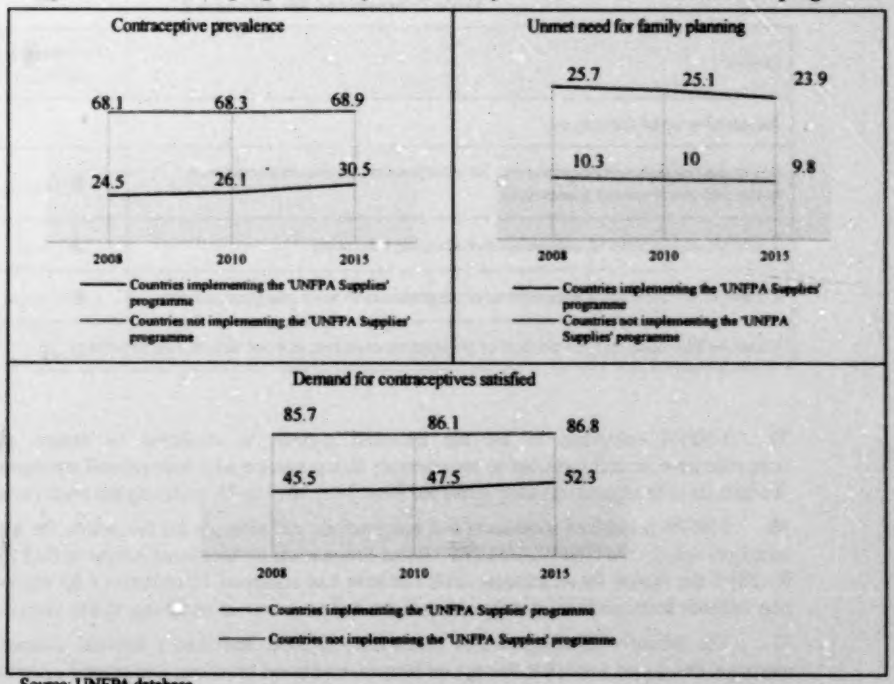
21. Output targets for increasing access to integrated services and for strengthening the delivery of HIV programmes were partially met. Fifty-five countries, instead of 69, reached the implementation stage of the 10-step approach to condom programming, mainly due to changed priorities. Eighty-one countries (target 95) had a costed, integrated sexual and reproductive health action plan. The target was not met primarily due to reduced resources and postponements.

22. UNFPA-supported tools were crucial for achieving these outputs. For example, the statistical model for estimating the number of women with fistula and the 'One Health' costing tool used to cost health plans were instrumental and used by countries such as Kenya to leverage resources. UNFPA-supported approaches, such as the engagement of community leaders, proved to be critical for increasing the demand for family planning in countries such as Niger and Nigeria.

23. UNFPA scaled up its humanitarian work and reached 10.6 million women and girls with sexual and reproductive health services and gender-based violence services. By 2015, 57 priority countries had the capacity to implement the minimum initial service package. Fifty-nine countries had humanitarian contingency plans that included sexual and reproductive health and services for survivors of gender-based violence. UNFPA enhanced its leadership role and affirmed its global position in humanitarian work. As a result, it attracted more funding for sexual and reproductive health services and services to prevent gender-based violence in humanitarian situations (see annex 5: Humanitarian action and resilience-building update).

24. Data suggest that UNFPA interventions contribute to improving trends in the strategic plan outcomes (figure 3). In countries with intensified UNFPA interventions in family planning (the 'UNFPA Supplies' programme, starting in 2007), there was an accelerated increase, beginning in 2010, in the use of family planning, compared to the increase in countries without intensified interventions.

Figure 3. Accelerated progress on key indicators, by existence of UNFPA thematic programme



Source: UNFPA database

25. Evaluation findings corroborate the effectiveness of family planning interventions. Programme evaluations in Afghanistan, Cambodia and Tajikistan reported an association between UNFPA

interventions and increased access to sexual and reproductive health services and reproductive rights (see annex 3, country results and case studies to illustrate theories of change).

26. Challenges for outcome 1 reported by country offices include: (a) difficulties in implementation and monitoring of existing sexual and reproductive health policies and guidelines; (b) cultural barriers and fear of perceived side effects in using family planning; (c) inadequate allocation of national resources for contraceptive procurement and supply-chain management; and (d) a shortage of skilled human resources, particularly midwives. These factors are informing and shaping workplans.

Outcome 2: Increased priority on adolescents, especially on very young adolescent girls, in national development policies and programmes, particularly increased availability of comprehensive sexuality education and sexual and reproductive health services

27. The period 2014-2015 witnessed progress in integrating adolescent and youth priorities into development frameworks. Adolescent and youth issues, including the demographic dividend, were reflected in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and in the Framework of Actions for the follow-up to the ICPD Programme of Action Beyond 2014. The Security Council adopted the historic resolution 2250 (2015) on youth, peace and security. The number of countries with laws that enable youth to exercise their rights and fulfil their needs for sexual and reproductive health services increased to 89, exceeding the strategic plan midterm target of 78.

28. UNFPA made good progress towards achieving the outputs under outcome 2 (see table 2); one output fully achieved and the other two narrowly missed. National capacity for conducting evidence-based advocacy was increased by supporting the establishment of platforms that advocate prioritizing adolescent and youth issues, especially those of marginalized groups, into national policies and plans. Ninety-four countries, versus a midterm target of 93 countries, had such platforms. UNFPA advocated allowing adolescents and youth to have access to sexual and reproductive health counselling and HIV services in 56 countries, narrowly missing the midterm target of 59.

Table 2: Scorecard for outcome 2

Output	Performance in 2014-2015
Increased national capacity to:	
6. Conduct evidence-based advocacy for incorporating adolescents and youth issues into development frameworks	● (Orange)
7. Design and implement comprehensive sexuality education	● (Green)
8. Design and implement comprehensive programmes to reach marginalized girls	● (Orange)
Expenses $121 million (7.5 per cent of programme expenses; 6.4 per cent of total expenses)	

29. UNFPA continued to provide technical support to countries to design and implement comprehensive sexuality education programmes in accordance with international standards. The number of countries with aligned curricula increased from 39 in 2013 to 73, matching the midterm target.

30. UNFPA prioritized adolescent and marginalized girl through: (a) the Action for Adolescent Girls Initiative; and (b) the UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage. By 2015, the Action for Adolescent Girls Initiative had equipped 15 countries with the technical know-how to better focus adolescent and youth policies and programmes on young, at-risk female populations.

31. The Initiative achieved several milestones. Ethiopia launched a national alliance to end child marriage; developed a national strategy on harmful traditional practices; and created a national action plan on female genital mutilation, child marriage and abduction in order to halt these practices by 2025. In Niger, the Initiative provided 8,912 girls in communities that have a high prevalence of child marriage with an eight-month programme to strengthen their health and their social and economic assets. The

Initiative reached more than 21,000 girls in India. By 2015, 50 countries (from a target of 52) had implemented health, social and economic asset-building programmes that help adolescent girls at risk of child marriage.

32. UNFPA must continue to invest in programmes that help marginalized girls. This is reinforced by the findings of the UNFPA comprehensive sexuality education evaluation, which found that young girls, especially the most marginalized, are often 'invisible', and not reflected in surveys or statistics. They live in families on the margins of society and subsist on less than one or two dollars a day.

33. A recurrent challenge for youth and adolescent programmes is the discordance between policies and norms. Policies may change, but harmful practices remain if norms have not changed.

Outcome 3: Advanced gender equality, women's and girls' empowerment, and reproductive rights, including for the most vulnerable and marginalized women, adolescents and youth

34. UNFPA continued its advocacy and policy guidance work at global, regional and country levels to support and advance gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. UNFPA provided evidence that informed the post-2015 development framework dialogues, which reaffirmed gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls as one of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

35. Trends in gender equality steadily progressed. The percentage of women who thought it justifiable for a husband or partner to hit his wife fell from 47 per cent in 2013 to 41 per cent in 2015. At the national level, the number of countries with a budget allocation for a gender equality action plan integrating reproductive rights increased to 71, exceeding the expected number of 62.

36. UNFPA fully achieved the midterm targets for two of the three outputs through which it contributes to gender equality (see table 3).

Table 3: Scorecard for outcome 3

Output	Performance in 2014-2015
9. International and national protection systems for advancing reproductive rights	● (Orange)
10. Capacity to prevent gender-based violence and harmful practices	● (Green)
11. Engagement of civil society organizations	● (Green)
Expenses: $ 209.2 million (12.9 per cent of programme expenses; 11.0 of total expenses)	

37. To strengthen national protection systems (output 9), UNFPA worked with national human rights institutions in 10 countries to conduct inquiries on sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights through human rights 'lenses', rather than merely through a public health approach. UNFPA supported national systems for tracking and reporting on the implementation of reproductive rights recommendations and obligations. Fifty-four countries have functional tracking systems. However, UNFPA did not meet the target of 66 countries with functional tracking systems, due to budget cuts and changes in priorities.

38. UNFPA made progress in strengthening the capacity of civil society to support gender equality. UNFPA strengthened the capacity of civil society organizations in 43 countries to institutionalize the engagement of men and boys in the campaign for gender equality.

39. With regard to gender-based violence and harmful practices, UNFPA continued to implement the UNFPA-UNICEF joint programme on female genital mutilation/cutting, which focuses on 17 countries. By 2015, all of these countries had policies to denounce female genital mutilation, and 13 of them have criminalized this practice. Furthermore, 2,920 communities in these countries declared the abandonment of female genital mutilation, exceeding the target of 2,000.

40. UNFPA worked in 13 countries, in the Asia-Pacific region to conduct national violence against women prevalence studies; and with UN-Women, co-led five United Nations organizations in developing

the essential services guidelines of the United Nations Joint Global Programme on Essential Services for Women and Girls Subject to Violence.

41. Challenges experienced in gender equality work included inadequate capacity in countries, suboptimal use of existing data to inform policy, and poor follow-up on policy implementation.

Outcome 4: Strengthened national policies and international development agendas through integration of evidence-based analysis on population dynamics and their links to sustainable development, sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights, HIV and gender equality

42. UNFPA produced and supported the generation of evidence-based research and analysis, including analyses on the demographic dividend, to support the incorporation of population dynamics into national, regional and global development frameworks. UNFPA published evidence-based reports that informed dialogues that ensured the integration of ICPD issues into the Sustainable Development Goals. UNFPA supported 30 countries in conducting demographic dividend analyses; many of these countries have begun the process of integrating the demographic dividend into their 2030 Agenda-related development frameworks.

43. The majority of outcome indicators on the availability of national population data showed positive trends. The number of countries with a census that met internationally agreed quality recommendations and those that completed evaluations in sexual and reproductive health increased. The number of countries with national household surveys that can support the estimation of key population and sexual and reproductive health indicators also increased, but fell short of the expected figure (89, versus the target of 95). At the output level, UNFPA fully achieved the midterm targets for three of the four outputs.

Table 4: Scorecard for outcome 4

Output	Performance in 2014-2015
12. Strengthened national capacity for production and dissemination of quality disaggregated data	● (Green)
13. Increased availability of evidence through cutting-edge in-depth analyses	● (Green)
14. Strengthened capacity for the formulation and implementation of rights-based policies	● (Red)
15. Strengthened national capacity for using data and evidence to monitor and evaluate national policies	● (Green)
Expenses: $ 245.3 million (15.2 per cent of programme expenses; 12.9 per cent of total expenses)	

44. UNFPA strengthened the capacity of countries to produce, analyse and disseminate population-related data, including population data in humanitarian emergencies. In 2015, 73 per cent of the countries that experienced humanitarian crises received technical assistance from UNFPA to use population data to support needs assessments, exceeding the midterm target of 70 per cent.

45. UNFPA did not reach its target on building capacity for data analysis. By 2015, 42 countries (versus the target of 66) had conducted a population situation analysis. Financial constraints were among the reasons cited for not meeting the target. Capacity-building in other data analysis aspects was on track: targets were met regarding the capacity to analyse and use disaggregated data on adolescents, and the capacity to disaggregate gender-based violence data.

46. An independent evaluation completed in 2014 on UNFPA support to national censuses showed that support for the 2010 census round was aligned with and relevant to national needs and priorities, and that the dissemination of census results improved during the 2010 round, even though most developing countries lacked interactive public access databases that house census data. The evaluation recommended that support for the generation of census data should be matched by a strengthening of capacity to use census results to determine population trends and analyse development indicators.

47. The main challenges in the population and development area included: (a) capacity development; (b) reliable and timely data for policymaking; and (c) adequate human and financial resources to effectively address growing demands for analyses of population data. A lesson learned is that the population situation analysis requires more support; unless it is accompanied by advocacy and capacity-building, with available data (including web-based access), the situation analysis is not necessarily used to inform policies.

Organizational effectiveness and efficiency

48. UNFPA made good progress in implementing the organizational effectiveness and efficiency outputs (see table 5).

Table 5: Scorecard for organizational effectiveness and efficiency

Output	Performance in 2014-2015
1. Improved quality assurance, monitoring and evaluation	● (Green)
2. Improved mobilization, management and alignment of resources	● (Orange)
3. Increased adaptability through innovation, partnership and communications	● (Green)
Expenses: $ 321.6 million (2.6 per cent of programme resources; 16.9 per cent of total expenses)	

Output 1: Enhanced programme effectiveness by improving quality assurance, monitoring, and evaluation

49. UNFPA implemented the planned corporate- and programme-level evaluations for 2014-2015. The quality of country programme evaluations improved in 2014. The 2014 evaluations revealed that the majority of country programmes were considered to be effective, while the rest were partially effective. Almost all country programmes were considered to be relevant to the country context and to the UNFPA strategic focus; however, programme efficiency and sustainability require improvement. With regard to the recommendations of country programme evaluations, UNFPA implemented 77.9 per cent of the follow-up actions of the recommendations.

50. Launched in 2014, the UNFPA global programming system enabled the systematic and real-time management of the implementation of workplans and budgets. In addition, the strategic information system enabled UNFPA to plan and monitor progress quarterly and report on results annually. The two systems are linked and permit the analysis of results and programme resources.

51. UNFPA scaled up its knowledge-management capacity by establishing a South-South project and adopting a South-South corporate plan. In 2015, 76 per cent of programme countries used this modality for programming.

Output 2: Improved mobilization, management and alignment of resources through an increased focus on value for money and systematic risk management

52. In 2015, UNFPA mobilized $972 million, or 92 per cent, of its midterm target of $1,051 million. For non-core resources, UNFPA mobilized $574 million, which represents 100 per cent of the target. For core resources, UNFPA mobilized $398 million, or 83 per cent, of the strategic plan target of $478 million. UNFPA maintained its diverse donor base of 133 donors in 2015. This donor base is one of highest among the funds and programmes of the United Nations.

53. UNFPA strengthened financial accountability and optimized the use of resources to focus on programme work and adapt to the development finance landscape. It steadily reduced the proportion of resources used for management costs, from 13.1 per cent in 2013 to 10.9 per cent in 2015, exceeding the target of 11.2 per cent. UNFPA obtained a clean audit opinion in 2014 and in 2015, and reduced operating fund account advances that were overdue, from 3 per cent in 2013 to 1.37 per cent in 2015 (versus a target

of 6 per cent). It is fully compliant with the standards of the International Aid Transparency Initiative. UNFPA now provides quarterly International Aid Transparency Initiative data releases with more specific alignment to international purpose codes.

54. UNFPA progressed in implementing enterprise risk management using industry 'best practices' and an internally developed information technology system. The first cycle will be completed in mid-2016, when an evaluation of the enterprise risk management framework will be undertaken to identify further refinements.

55. UNFPA took part in United Nations business harmonization and simplification. As co-convener of the Fiduciary Management Oversight Group of the United Nations Development Group, UNFPA contributed to obtaining approval for the revised legal instruments for the United Nations Development Group pass-through financing mechanisms. UNFPA also contributed to rolling out the joint operations facility in Brazil, the independent evaluation of the business operating strategy, and the development and costing of the United Nations oversight and accountability model.

56. UNFPA strengthened human resource management. The vacancy rate dropped from 15 per cent at the end of 2013 to 13 per cent at the end of 2015, surpassing the midterm target of 14 per cent. The lead time for recruitment dropped from 147 days to 136 days. The leadership pool, established to address challenges in succession planning, has grown, and UNFPA has identified 83 new potential managers. The surge roster, which is used to respond to humanitarian situations, has grown to 96 members. In 2015, UNFPA deployed 13 staff members from this roster.

57. UNFPA has promulgated a new individual consultant policy, which, along with the new consultants' roster, improved the quality and timeliness of recruitment. It developed a new guide to address underperformance. UNFPA is recognizing the services of long-serving staff members and those nearing retirement as part of a revamped rewards and recognition initiative.

Output 3: Increased adaptability through innovation, partnership and communications

58. UNFPA expanded its partnerships with the private sector. In 2015, UNFPA received increased financing (over $10.5 million) from the private sector, with in-kind support contributing an additional $800,000. Contributions came from diverse entities and resulted in over 60 new partnerships, several of which supported UNFPA humanitarian work. This demonstrates an increased acknowledgement of UNFPA expertise in addressing the safety and health of women and girls in crises.

59. UNFPA continued to expand its global media outreach. In 2015, UNFPA received approximately 1,000 influential media references per month. The UNFPA Facebook page has received 271,185 'likes', an increase of more than one third since January 2014. The UNFPA Twitter account now has 104,849 followers.

60. UNFPA is cultivating innovation in the organization, building on an innovation fund established in 2014. In 2015, UNFPA launched 17 new innovative initiatives from nearly 90 submissions. UNFPA has established innovation teams in many of its offices to identify, prototype and scale up technologies and programme practices.

IV. Findings of the midterm review

A. Overview

61. The progress documented in section III and reflections from internal and external stakeholders indicate that the current strategic plan has sharpened focus and coherence in UNFPA work.

62. The strategic plan, rooted in the emerging development environment, positions UNFPA to succeed in that environment. The "bull's eye" (the vision and direction of the strategic plan) is at the heart of the UNPFA mandate. The plan responds to the ICPD Programme of Action and was influenced by ongoing, broader development processes. As in the 2030 Agenda, the UNFPA strategic plan calls for reaching those farthest behind by giving priority to the most vulnerable and marginalized people, including adolescent girls, indigenous people, ethnic minorities, migrants, sex workers, persons living with HIV and persons with disabilities.

63. The Sustainable Development Goals reaffirm the recognition in the ICPD Programme of Action that human beings must be at the centre of sustainable development. UNFPA has a vital role to play in supporting countries to implement and achieve these Goals. The Sustainable Development Goals cannot be achieved without empowering women, girls and young people to control their bodies and their lives, nor can they be achieved without high-quality population data and analysis to support evidence-based policy making. The focus on sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights, a key pillar of the current strategic plan, will continue to guide the organization's work. For UNFPA, the 2030 Agenda means doing things differently, but not necessarily doing 'different' things.

64. The work of UNFPA is relevant to all the Sustainable Development Goals, directly through: (a) Goal 3, with its inclusion of universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, maternal health and ending the AIDS epidemic; (b) Goal 5, with targets to eliminate discrimination against women and girls, eliminate gender-based violence and harmful practices (including child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation), and ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights; (c) Goal 10, which addresses inequalities and discrimination, including for migrants; (d) Goal 16, ensuring the participation of women and girls in decision-making and their safety from violence; and (e) Goal 17, which promotes strong data systems and partnerships with civil society.

65. The UNFPA mandate has indirect links to the following Sustainable Development Goals: (a) nutrition for young girls and mothers, in Goal 2; (b) skills and education related to gender equality and human rights, in Goal 4; (c) youth employment (central to the demographic dividend), in Goal 8; and (d) strengthening resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and their impact, in Goals 1 and 13. The midterm review has determined that the UNFPA strategic plan is well aligned with the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and with the findings of the ICPD Beyond 2014 review.

66. The 2030 Agenda recognizes the importance of the demographic dividend. This provides UNFPA with a unique opportunity to accelerate action to fulfil the core aspirations of ICPD Beyond 2014. These include the realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms, non-discrimination and gender equality, increasing investments in young people, and building stronger health systems and national statistical capacity.

67. UNFPA will enhance its work on the demographic dividend – which simply frames in a new way activities the organization already carries out under the current strategic plan – by promoting high-level global dialogue, facilitating regional efforts and working with countries to create the conditions necessary to ensure that women and young people, particularly adolescent girls, are empowered to reach their potential; that they are able to exercise their right to sexual and reproductive health, including family planning; that they are able to stay in school, avoid early marriage and early childbearing, and are not subject to genital mutilation; and that they are able to join the workforce and contribute fully to their communities and economies.

68. UNFPA will continue to work with Member States to support public policies that support social issues. These issues relate to the well-being of populations and include health care, education, housing and employment, among others. These policies ensure that individuals, especially young girls and women, have access to social protection services; that they do not suffer because of a lack of knowledge of their rights; and that they exercise a responsible influence, locally and nationally, on the development of social policies and services.

69. A shift in discourse is required not only to react to disasters and conflicts, but to prepare and empower individuals and communities to withstand and recover from them. One of the strategies to reduce risks is to ensure that people are resilient in disasters and conflicts. Building resilient communities requires empowering women and girls and strengthening the institutions and systems that serve them. This transformation based on resilience will require a response that does not replicate discriminatory practices against women and girls. It will require strong national institutions, with better risk management strategies and capacities in place before a crisis strikes.

70. UNFPA will continue to strengthen the capacity of Governments to generate population data and expand the use of population data by a range of national actors, including Governments, academia, civil society and the public.

71. The close partnerships with national statistical authorities over the past 45 years position UNFPA well to foster and promote innovation to fill data gaps, including through partnerships with the private

sector. By strengthening the analyses of population dynamics and the links to sustainable development, UNFPA will support advocacy for increased social investments in education and health, especially sexual and reproductive health, and employment for adolescents and youth. This is particularly important for disadvantaged adolescent girls. The UNFPA focus on human rights promotes not only equity of access to high-quality services, but also the ability of adolescent girls to exercise their choice.

72. Based on analytical data, there is consensus within UNFPA and agreement with external stakeholders that midterm updates of the strategic plan should be minor and few in number. The midterm review reconfirms the strategic direction of UNFPA; there is no need to change the "bull's eye". There will, however, be increased measurement of resilience programming and humanitarian work. This will be achieved in part through refinements to the integrated results framework. While there are a number of country offices undertaking resilience-based development as part of their country programmes, UNFPA will make concerted efforts to strengthen capacity and interventions in this area.

B. Lessons learned from the integrated results framework

73. UNFPA learned several lessons from implementing the integrated results framework during the first two years of the strategic plan. The most often cited issue is related to the measurement of the results of the upstream work of UNFPA, within the context of the differentiated programming introduced by the business model. Another lesson learned concerned the 'bottom-up' approach used for baseline and target-setting for the results framework. While the bottom-up approach has its merits, reporting at the country level requires adjusting some of the targets, to more accurately reflect results.

74. The outcome theories of change were found to be a useful resource by country offices and improved the quality of planning. However, there is a perception that they focus more on traditional (downstream) modes of engagement and not enough on upstream modes of engagement. While the outcome theories of change provide an overarching logical sequence for programming, the output theories of change at the country level should be grounded in the country context.

C. Adjustments to the integrated results framework

75. The structure and main results of the integrated results framework will not change following the midterm review; the revised integrated results framework (see annex 1) has the same goal and four outcomes.

76. However, UNFPA proposes that the number of development outputs be reduced from 15 to 13, given that the four outputs under outcome 4 will be reduced to two, in order to streamline the work of UNFPA in the area of population data for development. Four new indicators were introduced and one was deleted to strengthen the measurement of results in this area.

77. The strategic plan recognized the need for an expanded role for UNFPA in humanitarian settings. The organization's humanitarian work spans emergency preparedness, disaster risk reduction, and humanitarian response and recovery. This work was guided by the principles of strengthening capacity, and working in partnership with local communities and affected populations. Key to the success of its humanitarian work is accountability to the people served. UNFPA must be able to sufficiently measure its own performance for the remainder of the strategic plan; it will therefore introduce three additional output-level indicators to the integrated results framework.

78. The remainder of the changes to the integrated results framework are minor. They include: (a) replacing three indicators with similar indicators used in the Sustainable Development Goal framework; (b) editing four indicators, to make them more specific; (c) adjusting targets for nine indicators that were either overperforming or the methods for their calculation had changed during 2014-2015; and (d) deleting three indicators that were no longer relevant after the adjustments. (Complete details of the revised integrated results framework are provided in annex 1.)

D. Business model

79. The UNFPA business model, as part of the strategic plan, makes a distinction between programme countries in terms of their needs and their ability to finance their development. This model is a pioneer in the United Nations system for deploying diversified programming approaches. It gives country offices the opportunity to engage with Member States and provide differentiated programming, based on the context

of the host countries. The same principle underpins the 2030 Agenda, where Member States committed to implementing the Agenda by "taking into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development and respecting national policies and priorities".

80. While the business model was an important step in using a differentiated programming approach, the lessons learned during 2014-2015 revealed some rigidity in the model and the need for a more flexible approach.

81. In response to Executive Board decision 2013/31, UNFPA updated its data for determining country classifications. In conducting this update, UNFPA used the latest data available for the six indicators and the two factors described in annex 4 of the strategic plan. The update did not change the country classifications for most of the countries; ninety per cent of the countries remained in the same quadrants. Considering the short time remaining for the current strategic plan, and the negligible impact on the business model, UNFPA decided not to propose any changes to the country classification.

82. There will be no changes to the business model; it will continue to guide the implementation of the strategic plan through 2017. Based on the lessons learned, UNFPA will allow more flexibility, especially in capacity development and knowledge management for advocacy and policy dialogue in the 'pink' quadrant countries (those with the lowest need and highest ability to finance their own programmatic interventions). UNFPA will further harmonize its business practices and exercise greater flexibility in defining the roles, functions and structures of its offices, based on the required capacity to achieve results.

E. Partnerships

83. The results achieved by UNFPA were possible by involving a broad set of partners. While the Sustainable Development Goals require the United Nations system to intensify and accelerate its interventions, UNFPA will seek to leverage its partnerships, especially with the private sector. UNFPA considers South-South and triangular cooperation important for implementing the 2030 Agenda.

84. The 2030 Agenda demands a global approach and greater emphasis on South-South cooperation, not only between and among Member States, but also with the private sector and civil society. UNFPA has supported countries in sharing experiences and expertise in areas such as censuses; in expanding access to sexual and reproductive health services; in preventing and responding to gender-based violence; and in increasing the participation of youth.

85. Strengthening partnerships and promoting innovation are essential to UNFPA, as they increase the impact of the organization's work across the "bull's eye". Doing things differently for UNFPA means better utilizing available resources, working effectively across institutional and geographical boundaries, and involving new partners. The lessons learned over the past two years indicate the central role that partnerships play in UNFPA work, such as the Sahel Women's Empowerment and Demographic Dividend Project. This project, undertaken in partnership with the World Bank, seeks to increase women's and adolescent girls' empowerment and their access to high-quality reproductive, child and maternal health services. It also seeks to increase South-South cooperation and knowledge-sharing.

86. The centrality of reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health in the 2030 Agenda reaffirms the key role of the United Nations system to support countries in addressing universal coverage with high-quality reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health services, including adolescent sexual and reproductive health services. The UNFPA role in the H6 partnership (Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS, UNFPA, UNICEF, UN-Women, WHO and the World Bank) reflects its commitment to that partnership and engagement with its partners. The partnership supports high-burden countries in tackling the root causes of maternal, newborn, child and adolescent mortality and morbidity, including gender inequalities and sociocultural and financial barriers, in order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

87. "Women and Girls First" is a joint initiative of UNFPA, Finland and Sweden that will provide comprehensive reproductive health care and emergency assistance, including post-rape treatment, counselling and support, to survivors of gender-based violence. The services will be delivered through mobile and stationary clinics, and through women's and girls' centres.

88. Leveraging new and existing partnerships is an important driver of impact for UNFPA. The organization will continue to expand and strengthen partnerships to carry out its work and to promote a broader understanding and recognition of the unique mandate of UNFPA. This includes working closely

with faith-based organizations, parliamentarians, civil society organizations, international financing institutions and the private sector.

F. Human resources

89. Many UNFPA offices have aligned their human resources to the strategic plan, which included ensuring an appropriate office structure and skills mix to achieve results. UNFPA will intensify its analysis of the distribution of skills and expertise within the organization. This analysis will allow UNFPA to conduct an inventory of its skills mix and address gaps in competencies. This exercise is an element of the UNFPA human resources strategy, 2014-2017.

G. Resource environment

90. The 2030 Agenda calls for a universal development mandate, blurring the distinction between donor countries and programme countries. Development financing will continue to evolve, as official development assistance remains vulnerable to domestic pressures, and programme countries are called upon to allocate larger proportions of domestic resources for national development. As a result, the traditional means of financing UNFPA activities is no longer entirely adequate in the new environment. In response to this new reality, the organization is exploring innovative proposals for a financial architecture that addresses these new constraints. UNFPA has begun internal reviews to identify such proposals and examine their feasibility in order to bolster its financial health and strengthen its ability to achieve its mandate.

91. The decreased share of regular resources, as a proportion of total resources in both 2014 and 2015, presents new challenges for UNFPA, since this trend is not expected to reverse itself for some time. UNFPA is revising its integrated resources framework to respond to the new financial reality. UNFPA will continue to advocate for increased contributions to regular resources, the bedrock of operational activities for development, as underscored in General Assembly resolution 67/226 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review. The midterm review of the integrated budget (DP/FPA/2016/3) presents a comprehensive and detailed financial framework for the strategic plan.

H. Global and regional interventions

92. The global and regional interventions are catalytic and complementary in-country interventions. The experience in implementing these interventions over the past two years has shown that they are an integral part of the integrated results framework and not merely additions to it. UNFPA undertook a review of the costs of the global and regional interventions to identify any residual management costs. The midterm review addresses areas of improvement for the global and regional interventions in the results and resources framework. These improvements include fine-tuning indicators and adjusting targets.

I. Implementation of the midterm review of the strategic plan

93. During 2016-2017, UNFPA will accelerate the implementation of its current strategic plan. UNFPA is undertaking a review of the organization that examines capacity, resources and commitments to ensure that staff members are equipped with the skills and structures to achieve high-quality results. UNFPA will complete the review in 2016, and will provide the incentives and tools to fully implement the strategic plan. This exercise will enable UNFPA to continue to be "fit for purpose" and able to support Member States in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

J. The next UNFPA strategic plan, 2018-2021

94. The development of the next UNFPA strategic plan will begin during the second half of 2016. The strategic plan will continue to effect transformative change within and outside the organization in order to expand the possibilities for women and young people to lead healthy and productive lives. It will be aligned with and support the Sustainable Development Goals, the 2030 Agenda and the Agenda for Humanity. The 2016 quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system and the outcomes of the Economic and Social Council dialogues will

provide strategic direction for the implementation of the strategic plan. UNFPA will strengthen resilience across the humanitarian and development continuum.

V. Elements of a decision

95. The Executive Board may wish to:

(a) Take note of the documents that make up the report of the Executive Director for 2016: DP/FPA/2016/2 (Part I, Part I/Add.1 and Part II), as well as the relevant annexes to these report, available on the UNFPA website;

(b) Welcome the findings as contained in the present report [DP/FPA/2016/2 (Part I)] and in the revised integrated results framework (annex 1 to the present report), as important steps in aligning the UNFPA strategic plan, 2014-2017, to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

(c) Welcome the progress achieved during 2014-2015 in implementing the strategic plan, while recognizing the challenges that lie ahead, and also welcome the commitment of UNFPA management to maintaining the strategic focus of the organization;

(d) Approve the revised integrated results framework [DP/FPA/2016/2 (Part I), Annex 1] and encourage all countries to assist UNFPA in reaching the total figure for regular and other resources for the remainder of the strategic plan period, including through multi-year pledges;

(e) Stress the importance of regular resources for the effective implementation of the strategic plan and encourage countries to increase their contributions to the regular resources of UNFPA;

(f) Request submission of the next UNFPA strategic plan, 2018-2021, at the second regular session 2017 of the Executive Board.